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AUTHOR Jasman, Anne; Payne, Lesley; Grundy, Shirley; Del Borrello, Adrianna

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports findings from a research project investigating teachers' construction of knowledge for teacher education and focuses on what teacher educators learn in their relationship with school-based practitioners. The research continues a study of professional partnerships in teacher education. Participants at a workshop included four teachers and six teacher educators. Their discussions were the basis for the study. Teacher educators indicated that they learned directly from school-based practitioners' classroom practice and the realities of their work outside the classroom. They also learned from being in the school context and seeing the impact of system policies on teachers' work. The learning of both teacher educators and practitioners was mediated by working with student teachers in the school context. This research adds to the knowledge of the collaborative partnership between teacher educators and practitioners. (Contains 53 references.) (SLD)

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Ms Adrianna Del Borrello (South Fremantle Senior High School)

For further information about the research discussed in this paper please contact: jasman@murdoch.edu.au

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Abstract:

School based practitioners are assumed to learn from their interactions and relationships with teacher educators. However, the existence of a reciprocal learning relationship where teacher educators learn from practitioners has received little attention in the literature. The intention of this research is to make explicit this less commonly acknowledged direction of the learning relationship between the two.

This paper reports findings from an ARC funded research project investigating teacher educators' construction of knowledge for teacher education and focuses on 'what' teacher educators learn in their relationship with school-based practitioners. This research continues a self-reflective study which addressed issues relating to professional partnerships in teacher education, and was premised on parity of esteem between school based practitioners and university based teacher educators.

Findings on what university based teacher educators say they learn from school based practitioners suggest there are two main foci to this learning: first, teacher educators appear to learn directly from school based practitioners' classroom practice and the realities of their work outside the classroom. Second, they also learn from being in the school context and seeing the impact of system policies on the work of teachers, in particular changes in curriculum, professional practices and school policy. In addition, the learning of both teacher educators and practitioners is mediated by working with student teachers in the school context. These findings are presented within the context of a developing understanding of the work of teacher educators, the nature of the teacher educators' knowledge and the role of professional practice in its construction. The question of the real value of this knowledge to teacher educators is also considered.

Introduction

It is hardly worth noting that there has been extensive research about teachers and teaching in schools over several decades. However, the knowledge of teacher educators, their work as practitioners or even as 'teacher-researchers' has been largely ignored within the literature (Ducharme and Ducharme, 1996).

A few studies are now emerging which document aspects of the life and work of teacher educators. For example, Acker (1997) describes becoming a teacher educator in Canada. The experiences of women teacher educators during restructuring (Cooper, Ryan, Perry and Gay, 1998) and life histories of academics in Colleges of Advance Education (Frawley, 1996) in Australia are reported. Gardner and Cunningham (1998) have documented the relationships between teacher trainers and educational change in Great Britain. These studies do not however, focus on the question of the knowledge construction of teacher educators that this research was particularly interested in. Cooper et al. (1998) do report on the responses of four female teacher educators to the issue of professional renewal suggesting that both personal and professional commitment, and cultural changes are important factors. One participant identifies the use of personal experience to inform her teaching, the knowledge 'was gleaned from diverse sources such as attending professional seminars and conferences, professional reading, researching and from personal reading of texts, and from people with whom she interacted' (p.14). However, the nature of this knowledge is not explored further.

This lack of research on teacher educators may in part follow from the marginalised position of education faculty. It would

appear that neither the academy nor the teaching profession values the knowledge of teacher educators. In the context of managing the dilemmas posed in collaboration between school and universities (Cuban, 1992) identifies three competing cultural values:

The university culture, prizing the values of reflection, rigorous analysis and scientifically produced research, competes against values within a professional school of applying disciplinary knowledge to practical situations. .... Both sets of values embedded in university structures compete against another set of values within schools. There action is prized. The knowledge that is admired is concrete relevant, drawn from experience, and applied to the practical dilemmas of teaching and learning. (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988; Goodlad, 1990). p.8

Reynolds (1995) argues that there is a deep feeling against education faculty in the university. It is suggested that commonly expressed beliefs such as 'teachers are born, not made' or 'pedagogy is best learnt from subject matter specialists' have contributed to the view that teaching cannot be taught through formal instruction, so that

> The logical consequence of these arguments is that professional education neither needs nor deserves university status. (p.4).

These opinions suggest that other members of the university do not recognize a 'discipline' of teacher education and, therefore, no discernable theoretical knowledge base for the work of teacher educators within the academy.

Teacher educators are, on the other hand, viewed by the teaching profession as being too theoretical, for example, Dill and Stafford (1994) referred to in Roth (1994) assert that

> the structures, organizations and reward systems required to sustain universities, their faculties, and their students preclude any restructuring of schools of education in ways that would enable them to prepare excellent teachers (p.620).

Dinham and Scott (1996) note that 'few teacher education programs concentrate on the daily, practical expectations of teaching' even though they acknowledge that a 'theoretical base is essential' (p.47).

Yeatman (1996b) distinguishes between the work of academics and academic knowledge which is 'ruled by the conventions of science taken in its most general sense' (p.287) and that of practitioners which is 'informed by a particular knowledge base regarding the service in question, and which (is) also oriented in terms of a service ethic.' (p.287). Cuban (1992) concludes that 'despite decades of trying to reconcile these competing values and conditions one obvious outcome has been a stunted sense of community among educational researchers and practitioners.' (p.8). It might be argued that there is also a stunted sense of community between the teacher educator, who may also be an educational researcher, and the school based practitioner.

The ongoing work of Professional Development Schools in the United States (Bullough, Kauchak, Crow, Hobbs and Stokes, 1997b; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Metcalf-Turner and Fischetti, 1996; Murray, Hollingsworth and Garcia, 1998; Ross, 1995) and similar initiatives in Australia (Gore, 1995) have focussed on developing less 'stunted' partnerships which provide 'exemplary education for pre-service teachers, support continuing professional development of experienced teachers, and involve schools and universities in collaborative research' (p.86).

However, research into such partnerships does not necessarily address such intended outcomes. Myers (1997) describes how university-school collaborative efforts in the United States and Canada and action research efforts in the United Kingdom focus more on the mechanics of establishing the partnerships and interpersonal relationships. They appear less concerned with the research literature on school reform or reform-oriented scholarly writing on learning, the knowledge base for teaching, adult learning, reflective practice, and teacher development in such partnerships.

Given this agenda it could be argued that professional development schools perpetuate the emphasis on 'practical knowledge' within schools whilst the university's role is still to conduct (and control) the research agenda albeit collaboratively. This privileging of academic research over teachers' practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983; Yeatman, 1996b) is evident in various current themes in the literature. For example, the importance of developing teachers as researchers (Gore and Zeichner, 1995; Tripp, 1987), improving the relevance of educational research, (Hargreaves, 1997; Kennedy, 1997) and finding ways of enabling teachers to have a voice in developing the knowledge base about teaching (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993; Zeichner, 1994) are predicated on the value of practitioner research being recognized by the academic community in particular rather than seeking recognition from other practitioners. Yeatman, (1996b) argues in a similar vein that even though 'action research looks like practice friendly research (it) continues to privilege science as the proper mode of knowing.' (p.285).

There have been a number of initiatives in Australia and elsewhere which have gone some way to develop a sense of community between academics as educational researchers and teacher educators and teachers as researchers and as practitioners.

These have focussed on partnerships between universities and schools in support of school reform and teacher development. For example, the Innovative Links Project (ACIIC Roundtable, 1996; Yeatman, 1996a; Yeatman and Sachs, 1995) and National Schools Network (Ladwig, Currie and Chadbourne, 1994; Sachs, 1997) have provided support for collaboration between teachers and academics in addressing school-based issues and concerns and given opportunities for the development of both teachers and academics (Grundy et al., in preparation; Hogan and Strickland, 1998; Yeatman and Sachs, 1995). These initiatives have also provided

> opportunities for both parties to rethink how they can improve their practice. When teacher research is complemented by academic research new types of knowledge can be produced and new forms of teacher and teacher educator practice and professionalism can be initiated.' (Sachs, 1997) p.54.

This suggests that there should be more emphasis on the complementary nature of the research and learning that occurs within the exchanges between teachers and academics. Within this view it would seem that teachers and academics are seen as each belonging to distinct cultures where there is more commonality within each group than between them. Thus it might be assumed that university based teacher educators are a homogenous group who share the outsider's interpretation of their priorities - as having little interest in the 'practical', just as it is often assumed that teachers have little interest in research and the theoretical. However, as Bullough, Hobbs, Kauchak, Crow and Stokes, (1997a) note

> Our data suggests another cultural terrain, located within our department of education, which presents challenges perhaps as difficult as those embedded in school-university differences. Across the discipline driven researchers, the field-focused researchers, and the clinical faculty, recognition is growing that over time a clinical ghetto has formed within the department, grounded in values quite different in some respects from those of tenure-line faculty. (p.91)

Bullough et al., (1997b) describe how each of these groups has its own priorities; for example,

> clinical faculty see their primary commitment to their pre-service students, as well as to the teachers and students in public schools. Discipline driven researchers view teacher education as one of several important missions of the department ... and field-focussed researchers are torn between doing substantive research connected to schools and the demands of a research university which values theoretical journals over teacher education journals. (p.92)

How then do university based teacher educators working in partnership with school based practitioners manage such 'cultural differences'? The field-focussed researchers described by Bullough et al (1997) and university based teacher educators involved in partnership arrangements between schools and universities have been characterised as living somewhere in the borderlands, at the margins, as boundary spanners or as translators between theory and practice. For example,

> The emergence of school-university partnerships has created a borderland where those who work in both settings may find themselves swimming in a new element.' (Sandholtz and Finan, 1998, p.13)

> Many partnerships exist on the margins of both school and university life and, hence, are constructed around mutual interest, informal associations and mutual agreements. (Teitel, 1994, p.11)

Leiberman (1992) describes living a 'double life' (p.5) seeing herself move from 'being just a teacher' to being 'just a translator' (p.6) as she was engaged in building a network of school and university people (Mishler, 1979). Her involvement in this process resulted in

being uncomfortable in both worlds. Calling us "boundary spanners", "linkers", "marginal" - depending on one's orientation - helped, but just a little. (p.6).

But what is this borderland like? Brookhart and Loadman (1989) liken collaboration between schools and universities to multicultural education - but what is the cultural terrain of the borderland? What is/are the knowledge(s) of this borderland? How is that knowledge acquired? And whose knowledge counts as legitimate? How are the competing claims of the university on teacher educators to conform to the expectations of university academics reconciled with the needs of school-based practitioners both in-service and pre-service? It is questions such as these that we hoped to address as a result of this collaborative and self-reflective enquiry into the knowledge construction of teacher educators through their work with and alongside school-based practitioners.

Methodology:

The research was guided by the central research question: how do teacher educators construct knowledge for teacher education? This was addressed through the exploration of a number of sub-questions. What and how do university-based teacher educators learn from school teachers? How do university-based teacher educators critically assess this learning? How do university-based

teacher educators incorporate this learning into their professional practice? How do classroom teachers perceive their role in this process? What are the perceived professional benefits of this learning relationship?

The research was designed as a self-reflective study using a process of reflective self-deliberation (Bonser and Grundy, 1988). This was carried out in two phases. The first phase was a data generation phase. This involved the group (see endnote 1) of school based practitioners and university based teacher educators (see endnote 2) meeting for an initial discussion of issues relating to the research. During this discussion areas for reflection were identified and a set of interview questions generated.

The interview was in three parts. The first part asked us to think and talk in general terms about the learning relationship between school based practitioners and university based teacher educators. The second part asked us to describe and reflect upon specific interactions we had had either as a teacher educator with school based teachers or as a school based teacher with university based teacher educators. The questions in this section of the interview also asked us to reflect upon these interactions or relationships as learning experiences for teacher educators. The third part again was speculative, asking us to reflect more generally upon the potential for learning by university based teacher educators from school based practitioners.

The interview questions were revised and further developed before a research assistant tape-recorded an individual, self-reflective, open-ended interview with each member of the research team. These were transcribed and research participants edited and revised the transcripts of their interviews to produce a statement of documented experiences and reflections in written rather than spoken form. These transcripts are the data which the research team and a research facilitator have worked with during in a three day collaborative workshop, a three day data analysis workshop and four subsequent writing days.

Our processes within the first workshop in April 1997 focussed first on establishing a shared set of expectations and understandings of the work we were doing. We identified our reasons for being there, who we were and what we understood by what it is to learn as an adult. We achieved this through individual writing, round robins, walking, talking and listening, and the use of visual metaphors to explore our understandings. During the first afternoon and subsequent sessions we explored the texts derived from the interviews through individual and paired analysis before pooling our insights in groups to provide a group perspective.

We focussed on two texts first; one from a university based teacher educator and the other from a school based practitioner. Our task was to identify what we expected to find, what we didn't expect to find and what we did not find which we expected to find. We then worked on identifying key phrases, categorising them and then mapping them for the first two transcripts before working in pairs on two of the remaining texts.

We subsequently completed a three day writing workshop in October 1997 where we undertook a more detailed analysis of the transcripts, coding and entering on NUD*IST (Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty Ltd., 1993). Not all members of the original research team continued their involvement to this stage of the project (see endnote 3). Initial processes within the group involved re-establishing our contacts with each other and re-orientating to the data. This has been a feature of each of our workshops and writing days. When we met again in October 1997 we each re-read our personal interview data and some of us had the opportunity to look at other transcripts that we had not read before. The interview transcripts were now edited to be acceptable to NUD*IST and these transcripts were reviewed. We worked as two groups, coming together as a large group at several points during the three days to share the outcomes of our analysis. One group worked on the question of how teacher educators learnt from school based practitioners. The second group focussed on what was learnt from school based practitioners.

It is the findings on the work of this group that are reported in this paper which is the culmination of a series of collaborative writing days. We have met four time including a day in April and three times during October and November during 1998 to work collaboratively. In between we have individually contributed to the development of the paper which is being presented here. The processes of this research are the subject of another paper in preparation.

The knowledge of teacher educators

What is the 'knowledge' of the teacher educator? Beattie (1997) in describing the creation of communities of inquiry suggests that

> '*teachers* themselves should know what they know, and that they should use that knowledge to make new knowledge, and to continually reconstruct their professional understandings' (p.125).

We would like to argue that teacher educators are also teachers who should know what they know, and that they should use that knowledge to make new knowledge, and continually reconstruct their professional understandings. The following discussion explores the nature of the knowledge(s) of university based teacher educators.

The university based teacher educators (UTE) together identified the development of a broad base of knowledge as significant, including both theoretical and practical elements.

> I think teacher educators need to have a very broad knowledge base and I suppose traditionally that's been thought of as a base in both theory and practice. That way of thinking is still quite useful but I'd see those things as being much more related. . (UTE Carolyn, 9-12)

This knowledge was well articulated by one university based teacher educator as disciplinary related knowledge and knowledge of practices.

> There is knowledge about subject disciplines, knowledge about human learning, knowledge about human society, knowledge about the contextual issues such as the political purposes of schooling in society. All of that is substantive disciplinary related knowledge. Then of course, there is knowledge about the practices of teaching and the practices of schools. But these kinds of knowledge need to be intellectually held and generated. They shouldn't be seen as separate. I think each teacher educator really will have a specific area within that lot where they have greater strengths but I do think that teacher educators need that breadth of understanding - in some ways like primary school teachers. (UTE Carolyn, 12-23)

Cultural understanding is also seen as being part of this knowledge of practice(s).

> I think that you do need to have a realistic, on the ground, understanding of the culture of the classroom, and what's involved in the reality of day to day teaching, which encompasses many more things than just teaching math's or teaching language or teaching social studies. (UTE Nicola, 18-26)

A distinction is made between a knowledge of theory and practice and knowledge of context. This contextual knowledge is seen as an essential part of the teacher educators knowledge, located in the 'real' world where theory and practice articulate.

> So a teacher educator does, I think, need to have a really good knowledge of the context in which the theory and the teaching practice etc., that are being passed on to the student teachers, must occur. That it's not a laboratory context; it is a real world context. (UTE Nicola, 27-34)

> Working in a number of schools provides university-based teacher educators with opportunities to learn about a range of classroom contexts and practices; for example,

> Through classroom teachers, the teacher educator can have access to a wider variety of contexts and practices than his or her own particular personal experience of teaching could provide. (UTE Nicola, 100-103)

There are other 'knowings' which are more about the knowledge of the teacher educator as practitioner.

> There are other 'knowings' which ... enable the interaction between myself and students to be more effective; my capacity to communicate effectively, my capacity and my knowledge of ways of creating an appropriate learning environment for my students, my knowledge of how I can work to meet individual student needs and identify the differences between my students? (UTE Karen, 19-24)

Another kind of contextual knowledge which is identified relates to understanding the impact of 'big picture' issues on schools and the work of practitioners. Two broad themes are identified - coping with change and systemic policy implementation - which are particularly significant for school-based practitioners.

> When teacher educators communicate with school-based practitioners they are able to discuss issues that may face teacher education students and find out about the changes that are taking place in the system. (SBP Veronica 45-48)

> I know what we're doing and we're subject to constant change I'm just wondering whether the universities are keeping up with these changes: organizational changes, curriculum changes, changes in pupils' expectation, the demands on pupils and pupils' changing needs. (SBP Eric 140-144)

University based teacher educators also listed a number of areas of change with which schools are having to cope with and indicated the importance of learning about the impact of these changes on schools directly from school based practitioners.

> I need to know about specific content, about changes in the systems or in the way things are being done. (UTE Karen 55-56)

> So school-based practitioners are best placed to give teacher educators practical access to that evolving set of professional-responsibilities. (UTE Sally 210 - 212)

> I'm picking up a lot of the information about changes and trends in practice as opposed from the professional theory that we try to keep up with (UTE Nicola, 446)

> there are a whole lot of other issues about the organisation and management of schools, that as university based teacher educators we need to keep up to date with. (UTE Carolyn, 68-70)

The other area that was identified by both teacher educators and school-based practitioners related to the impact of the implementation of systemic policy initiatives.

> Secondly, teacher educators need to be current with issues affecting the education system - be it performance management, the current industrial climate or any other issues, which have an impact on the role of the school-based practitioner. (SBP Veronica, 19-22)

> When I talk to practitioners in schools and when they talk to me about their work and how some of these policies are impacting on them or what the policies are meaning to them, I learn a lot more from them than I would by just reading the policy or the literature or reading other research. (UTE Carolyn, 150-154)

Performance management was given by both a teacher educator and a school based practitioner as an example of such policy implementation about which direct learning from school based practitioners would be valuable.

> For instance, last year when the school performance management policy was introduced into schools I was working with a group of teachers in a school at that time and they were able to teach me all about the policy; about what it meant for them, about how it was implemented, etc. (UTE Carolyn, 71-76)

> If you look at things like performance management in schools, it's something that, from a teacher educator point of view, is of great potential to re-professionalise teachers, but from the classroom teachers' perspective, it's one more thing they have to do. The benefits are there but they have to be convinced. (SBP David, 258-263)

Such knowledge of 'bigger picture' issues was important both to inform university based teacher educator's work with the perspective and understanding of school based practitioners, but also to feed into the teacher educator's research agenda. As one university based teacher educator commented it provided the opportunity

> .. to experience some of the things that I am learning about: how schools are responding to some of the sorts of micro economic reform initiatives, essentially some of the restructuring agenda, how devolution is working on the ground in schools, how policies are being implemented in schools, how schools are adapting, how people are responding to some of the pressures that are coming from the socio-economic political context within which they are working. There's only one place that I can learn that and that's really from practitioners. I learn that through researching but also through the informal contact I have with people. I would emphasise the importance of that learning. (UTE Carolyn 131-145)

Another theme highlighted by several school-based practitioners was the responsibility of teacher educators to be up with new trends for the benefit of their students learning and to enable them to contribute to school and teacher professional development.

> I think they should be aware of modern trends in education. (SBP Eric, 8)

> Finding out about new research.... So if a teacher educator came out and said, 'oh, there's been such and such a thing going on in this area of teaching,' it might well be something you really want to look into. At least read up on and find out a bit more. (SBP Mary, 419, 423-426)

This contextual knowledge, which seems to be the 'place' where theory and practice come together, is learnt through teacher educators having access the 'experience' of being a school based practitioner. It comes from making an opportunity to spend time in schools and from the teacher educator's own past experiences as a school based practitioner. It also comes the teacher educators' own educational research. Having access to theoretical and practical knowledge, and to these experiences of contexts may enable the teacher educator to be 'boundary spanners' translating the experience of working in schools to other audiences such as student teachers, their colleagues and the research community.

Constructing new knowledge in and through interaction and relationship

It is clear from the information extracted from the interviews of university based teacher educators and school based practitioners that the richness of the knowledge described in the previous section is developed through the interactions and relationships between university based teacher educators and school practitioners. University-based teacher educators and school-based practitioners showed a high degree of congruence in their perceptions of teacher educators' construction of knowledge in and through their relationship with school-based practitioners. The knowledge is often described as being about the 'real' work of the teacher in the classroom with its focus on the practical. Learning about the 'realities' of implementation of new initiatives to both inform their own teaching practices and to help student teachers develop their expertise. For example,

> We had very experienced teachers in the unit who had used student centred approaches over a number of years and challenged some of the assumptions that we made in terms of process, we learnt and we did it differently (UTE Karen, 459-462)
>
> Collecting specific ideas of planning, programming and practical applications and collecting ideas of methods used. (SBP Eric, 55-57)
>
> I can go out to schools and see teachers doing very innovative things that we haven't thought of that means that I can bring those ideas (to) working with the students (UTE Vivienne, 162 - 165)
>
> If they are coming into school which may have a very strong science programme ... with a strong emphasis on practical activities then they could see what is entailed in taking these lessons. (SBP Eric, 50 - 53)
>
> .. to become acquainted with people who are using technology and doing computer work in schools. (UTE Vivienne, 469-70)

It was recognised by both university based teacher educators and school-based practitioners that their relationship was also important to fostering research as a means of knowledge construction; for example,

> Just expanding on their knowledge base may be opening up a whole lot of areas that they may want to do research into. (SBP Mary, 412-413)
>
> So I'm feeding that knowledge into my research. (UTE Carolyn, 76)
>
> Another teacher educator made the point that it seems that this renewal of experience is valuable more for the opportunity for 'practice to inform theory' and to explore 'whether the theories we've been using need to be revised or rethought' (UTE Emily 38, 44).
>
> This renewal of experience informs theory, provides a better sense of what is possible which, in turn, affects student-teacher learning through modified programme/unit design and content. (UTE Sally, 77-89)

Interestingly both university-based teacher educators and school-based practitioners also talked about learning from the work of student teachers.

> I do learn from student teachers: what they value in working with teachers - generally practical information about classroom routines, discipline policies and management strategies, useful resources etc. (UTE Sally, 157 - 160)
>
> She (a student teacher) came out to do a little research project with my students on effective reading and that I learnt from because I then took some of the principles that she used and put them into my lessons (SBP Mary, 347 - 350)

In their role as supervisors of teaching practice, university based teacher educators learn about school matters vicariously, through the way the student teachers interact with school based practitioners in the classroom.

> I do learn from student teachers about what they value in working with teachers (practical information about classroom routines, discipline policies and management strategies, useful resources etc) and often consider how I might add to these. (UTE Sally, 157-160).
>
> What is learned is then added to the knowledge of university based teacher educators about how schools operate and is passed on to other students teachers by the teacher educators to enhance understanding of schools.

> An understanding of these sorts of relationships within a school culture could really help student teachers adjust to their role within a school, both as students and as beginning teachers (UTE Nicola, 388-391).
>
> I can say that, "This is the way things are and you work around or within it and if you can't then we'll have to find some other way." (UTE Karen, 546-548)

The words of one teacher educator encapsulates the knowledge construction which teacher educators do through their interaction and relationships with practitioners or as she so ably describes as '(seeing) through the eyes of the school-based educator'.

> the realities (both opportunities and constraints) to classroom life;
>
> to reflect on the perceived 'gap' between theory and practice; to appreciate the challenges and concerns of teachers;
>
> to further understand how teachers negotiate with each other to extend their students and their own learning;
>
> to evaluate the impact of professional development and the outcomes of education policy on schools, on teachers and on students' learning. (UTE Sally, 78-85)

Another subtler theme emerges from our examining of the construction of knowledge achieved through interactions between teacher educators and school based practitioners. It has to do with a sense of connection with the profession that is achieved through collaboration. This connection provides opportunities for a sense of enhanced professionalism to develop where there is an identification of teacher educators with school based practitioners and some acceptance on their part that teachers educators are part of the profession.

> One of the professional benefits is the enrichment of my own practice as both teacher and as a researcher. Also, of my own sense of connection with the profession. Through the innovative Links project, which is the most recent experience and was such a rich time, I really did feel a sense of connection and partnership with the profession. That was really about my own professional standing within the profession. I now talk about myself much more than I did before as a member of the profession. (UTE Carolyn, 298-306)

The interrelationships between school practitioners and teacher educators are central to the development of this sense of enhanced professionalism. This view of the importance of such professional connections is also articulated by a school based practitioner.

> Well the professional benefits for the profession in general is that if we do communicate, share ideas, and are available to one another then we must enhance the profession. (SBP Eric, 292-294)

The mutuality of this collaborative learning relationship must always be acknowledged. Both university based teacher educators and school based practitioners give examples.

> So professionally I think it's an interrelationship that provides the university teacher educator with the lifeline and a way of keeping informed and up to date on how things actually happen in the school so I can see that as how it would benefit them professionally. I think it's an updating in the sense of being professionally a part of the school scene. (UTE Emily, 436-440)
>
> the learning that took place was shared with both groups developing a working relationship which emphasised the nature of collaborative learning. This collaborative partnership has provided school-based practitioners an opportunity to discuss issues that don't often surface when talking to other school-based practitioners and work together with a teacher educator in finding a solution for those issues, to think critically about their practice and share their findings with other practitioners. (SBP Veronica 135-148)

Whilst there is much agreement among teacher educators and school based practitioners about the breadth of knowledge they should have and how they construct and reconstruct this knowledge in the light of working with and alongside practitioners there are differences in perspective. Mutuality does not imply equivalence in the value given by different participants to different elements of 'the knowledge' of teacher educators. This was clearly demonstrated as we worked collaboratively on this research. In our first workshop a passing comment made by a school-based participant referring to the research project as 'your work' meaning 'university work'. This teacher then shared that her absence from school to participate in the collaborative research project was not seen as 'valid' by her colleagues. However, later a teacher educator participant commented how she thought the best professional learning is through research.

This highlights the different cultures with different priorities and imperatives that exist in schools and universities, that often make it hard to find common ground or perhaps even a shared borderland. Instead, teacher educators are often found in the land of the other, interestingly within this collaborative research school based practitioners seem to have had a similar experience; working in the land of the teacher educator, not as a practitioner but as a researcher. If there is no common ground, is there a borderland as has been suggested by some writers. This question is now explored further.

Borderlands

The differences in perspective noted before are indicative of the different cultures of university and school organizations (Cuban, 1992) and centre on issues of theory versus practice, the real versus the 'ivory tower', whether teacher educators have credibility as practitioners and really understand the work of teachers today. School based practitioners, in particular, raise these points as issues. They mention aspects of a teacher's professional life other than just the face to face teaching in the classroom or even the preparation for such. These references, however, are often to do with the opportunities or possibilities to construct new knowledge about this wider role, rather than indicating that this is actually taking place. The many examples of what this other work might involve suggest that these school based practitioners did not feel that aspects of their work within and beyond the classroom are widely understood by teacher educators.

> The freedom that some teacher educators assume exists with the classroom is not there as soon as you move into upper school .. but that's the real world we operate in. (SBP David, 80, 86)

> They are not always aware of all the other duties that are involved in being a teacher things like department in science teaching you also have form to do and those kinds of things and I don't think that the practitioners are always aware of all the additional duties. (SBP Mary, 77, 94)

> I think they have lost touch with the shear volume of stuff other than subjects that you have to deal with in schools. (SBP Mary, 138)

Some teacher educators also mention these issues during their interviews.

> This view may of course only represent a relatively small proportion of people but the stereotypical view of school based practitioners as "holiday ridden", and university educators as "living in ivory towers", still abounds, maintaining a great divide between the two. The ground is shifting as we increasingly place ourselves to learn from each other. (UTE Sally 320-327)

Most of the school based practitioners stress the importance of teacher educators having themselves been classroom teachers in the past.

> I think that the most important knowledge teacher educators must have is the knowledge that they would have acquired if they themselves were, at some stage in their career, school-based practitioners. As a school-based practitioner they would have first hand experience in how a school functions: the complex role of the classroom teacher, the teacher's duties, learning and teaching styles, behaviour management, team building, and so on. (SBP Veronica, 12-18)

> It is important that they have been school based practitioners, that they have knowledge about different learning styles and different teaching styles, that they understand about behaviour management, that they can actually teach other people how to teach. (SBP Gwen, 11-16)

> They must have practical experience in the school setting. (SBP David, 12-13)

Some teacher educators also highlight the importance of their previous experience within schools.

> I am really aware of when I was teaching (UTE Nicola, 381).

> I know from working in education and in schools for a long period of time that I have a really strong sense of schools - how they work and how they're located within a bigger picture. (UTE Karen, 32-33)

Although, two university-based teacher educators suggest that such prior experience can be an impediment to learning.

> So my guess is that in some senses the fact that teacher educators have been successful practitioners themselves and

> are still successful practitioners in relation to their own teaching on campus, as is often the case, that may well be an impediment to learning from teachers. I mean, there is almost that sense that because I have been a practitioner I actually do know this and this is where my legitimacy as a teacher educator lies - it is in my knowledge about practice and therefore I really don't have anything to learn. It's a bit of a catch twenty-two. Unless they did actually understand and have a lot of knowledge about practice and about education and schooling and all sorts of dimensions then they wouldn't be successful teacher educators. But that then may become in some sense an impediment to us learning more. (UTE Carolyn, 245-257)

> In Innovative Links one of the things that we all did in the beginning was to go into schools talking about how we were really teachers. We seemed to believe that somehow this would increase our credibility in schools. What it did was to deny a whole range of experience and understandings and knowledge that we had that the teachers wanted. For example, we are all very skilled at managing committees. We know how to facilitate and work with adults because we do that all the time. We'd experience of action research but the only way we could think of to establish credibility was in saying ... 'We are just like you'. (UTE Karen 466-478)

Such impediments to the credibility of teacher educators are also identified by school based practitioners.

> I also think that there is the barrier that I've spoken of where there is, I don't know if respect is the right word, but .. certainly the credibility of both from both points of view is not always there. I think that's certainly the case because they have people coming back and doing post graduate studies and they get to know teachers. Whereas I think teachers who don't continue studying are not accepting teacher educators once they've got their degree and they just think that they're sitting in their ivory towers. I mean, it really is, that is the real impediment. You know respect for the professional, just the whole idea that they have things to offer practitioners. Yes, people do tend to close off from them. (SBP Mary, 391-406)

The way we view ourselves may be one of the keys to understanding working in the borderland.

> It's the recognition of the particular value that individuals bring to the profession and that the value is different for different individuals and so it should be. We all bring different things but one is not privileged over the other. (UTE Karen, 556-559)

> But I think we need to explore how teachers' knowledge could be given greater parity of esteem in terms of that knowledge being fed into campus based teaching etc. But it's complicated by a whole lot of things like time, like the resources to do it and all of that sort of stuff. But I think it's that it's thinking about our work with the profession more in that sort of partnership sense I suppose. (UTE Carolyn, 213-219)

It would seem that notions of partnership, parity of esteem and recognition of the particular contributions individuals make to the profession are ways in which individuals make more meaningful relationships for the co-construction of knowledge.

Discussion

Beattie (1997) also offers a view of teacher education where

> * teacher education involves the whole person - the personal and the professional are interconnected in the construction and reconstruction of professional knowledge
>
> * learning to teach involves beginning with ourselves, learning to be responsive to others and reconstructing what is known in the light of new experiences
>
> * a professional knowledge of teaching has many dimensions - cognitive, social, organizational, practical, moral, aesthetic, person, political and interpersonal. The theory and the practice are inseparable
>
> * learning to teach and teaching to learn require experiences and settings which support reflection, collaboration, relational learning and the creation of communities of inquiry
>
> * the construction and reconstruction of professional knowledge is a career-long process not a single event. It is always a work in progress. (p.126)

As teacher educators and school-based practitioners we would suggest that this view of teacher education and the 'knowledge(s)' embedded within it are appropriate to each of us irrespective of our particular contexts. Certainly as evidenced in this paper the knowledge of teacher educators embraces these dimensions.

The interview data suggests that there are themes which are commonly held by both teacher educators and school practitioners; for example, the importance of the development of a broad base of knowledge for teacher educators. Within this knowledge the importance of both theoretical and practical perspectives is also recognised. As might be expected school based practitioners value the practical more that the theoretical, but the practical is also highly valued by teacher educators.

Teacher educators also have the opportunity to access, often vicariously, the knowledge of the practitioners' contexts. The importance of contextual knowledge, or as Clandinin and Connelly (1996) describe it - the 'professional knowledge context' of practitioners, clearly emerges as a significant feature of teacher educators' knowledge. The construction of this knowledge is largely mediated by the access teacher educators have to practitioners and to schools. This knowledge is crucial in their work within schools and supports the professional development of student teachers and school based practitioners. It is a critical part of the knowledge they need to travel and translate between the worlds of the school and practitioner, and the world of the university. This contextual knowledge characterises the borderland between theory and practice.

The construction of these knowledges: theoretical, practical and contextual occurs in many situations but this paper reflects teacher educators' knowledge construction through their interactions and interrelationships with school based practitioners. This research has challenged the directionally of the exchange between practitioners and teacher educators. The exchange is often of personal practical knowledge not theoretical knowledge. This personal practical knowledge is situated with school-based practitioners.

This research highlights that there is a reciprocal exchange which does occur and suggests that if the voice of the practitioner is to be valued then there is a need to document and acknowledge publicly the value of the practical knowledge which they hold and the importance of teacher educators' knowledge of professional contexts. This exchange may also be mediated by the student teacher via school experience and the negotiation of the expectations of teacher educators and school-based practitioners.

Yeatman and Sachs (1995) suggest that partnerships such a those explored in this paper provide 'the new rub between theory and practice' producing 'more practically grounded, broadly informed theory' (p.45). The evidence here would suggest that they also contribute to the construction of contextual knowledge. Teacher educators also use personal professional knowledge within their own professional practice as part of the continual restructuring of their own knowledge and practices.

Much of the data revealed the knowledge that teacher educators constructed from and with school-based practitioners was framed by the concerns of both parties to 'bridge the divide between theory and practice' - between the school and the university. Much of the work on professional preparation has also centered on the divide between theory and practice and has addressed how this might be achieved through such strategies as educating the reflective practitioner (Schîn, 1987) to problem-based learning (Savin-Baden, 1997).

As well, there are various literatures that are arguably relevant to an understanding of the continuing development of professional practice, even though their main foci are somewhat different. These include research on the nature of expertise (Chi, Glaser and Farr, 1988), on workplace learning (Retallick and Groundwater-Smith, 1996) experiential learning (Boud and Edwards, 1998) and situated learning (Chaiklin and Lave, 1993).

These issues need further exploration. However, we would suggest that such dichotomies are counterproductive in helping to understand the 'borderland' which teacher educators inhabit. In this borderland the knowledge they construct and reconstruct draws from both 'theory' and 'practice'. It is constructed from our research on/with and for others and research on/with and for ourselves. It is constructed from teacher educators working with and alongside practitioners engaging first in the discerning use of narrative as 'one way in which we can construct and assimilate our knowledge base in teacher education'. (Weber, 1993). It is constructed and reconstructed through our conversations with each other as suggested by Palinscar, Magnusson, Ford and Brown, (1998) who argue that 'a piece of the answer must reside in contemporary discussions of the social nature of learning' .. which speak to the 'interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge'. (p.6). It is constructed and reconstructed through our reflections on our practices which are part of this collaborative research project. It is also characterised by a knowledge of context or of the professional knowledge landscape of practitioners. The importance of which is undervalued within the literature in enabling those working in the borderlands to translate and communicate within each of the particular landscapes in which they work.

Within this paper we have reflected as much on working in the land of the other as we have on the creation of a new, albeit border, land. However, we hope that this paper has gone some way towards going beyond the traditional divides of theory versus practice. Working in the borderland as a teacher educator and as a collaborative researcher has highlighted the question of whose knowledge counts. There are also concerns for legitimacy and equity both for teacher educators and school based practitioners. We have shared the beginnings of the work of a collaborative research partnership between practitioners and teacher educators where, as Yeatman (1996) notes there is the 'development of a reflective clarification of the pragmatics of

ordinary knowledge, interaction and social learning' (p.298).

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Endnotes:

1 In 1997 the following teacher and teacher educator/researchers were involved in the project: Tony Acciano; Adriana Del Borrello; Chris Nedkoff; Lesley Payne; Dom Ricci; Judy Trewick; Jenny Waller; Shirley Grundy; Anne Jasman; Judy MacCallum; Judy Robison; Beth Powell; Lorraine Strickland; Dianne Tomazos.

2 During the conduct of this project there has much debate about the words we use to describe which community we belong to. Somewhere during the discussions we began to use the terms school-based practitioner and university-based teacher educator. We still experience some concern with these labels as they give voice to only two significant features which might be used to describe us; first, where we would appear to spend the majority of our working time, and second, one aspect of the work we do. This is still problematic and deserves some further exploration.

3 Participants at the October 1997 workshop included four teachers: Adriana Del Borrello; Lesley Payne; Judy Trewick; Jenny Waller; and six teacher educators: Shirley Grundy; Anne Jasman; Judy MacCallum; Judy Robison; Beth Powell; Lorraine Strickland; Dianne Tomazos.